

FRIENDS OF DOWNHILLS Annual General Meeting

Sunday April 17th
at 5pm

Downhills Community Cafe

(by the tennis courts in Downhills Park)

Meet with the Friends, find out what has been going on in the park over the year and help decide what we think Downhills needs for the future

Refreshments available – all are welcome

Council Budget Cuts

This year Haringey Parks face severe challenges to their future survival. Central Government has demanded that local councils slash their spending and Haringey Councillors have voted through a number of cuts to local services. Green spaces have been dealt a 50% cut to their maintenance budget. Along with the loss of other central government grants this will lead to a large decrease in staffing levels in our parks. Despite determined efforts by parks campaigners the cuts are going ahead and can only have a detrimental effect.

We argued that good, safe and secure parks played a major role in creating strong, safe, secure and healthy communities and that any deterioration in our parks would lead to more social problems at more cost to the borough. But they did not listen! This means that we have to work harder over the coming years to support our local parks through the Friends of Downhills Park and the Haringey Friends of Parks Forum. All public services need more resources not less to maintain the standards that we all deserve.

The Haringey Alliance for Public Services (HAPS), involving trades unions, pressure groups and community organisations, have regularly attended rallies at the Civic Centre. Many have lobbied councillors and joined the protests to show the passionate opposition that exists in Haringey. We will continue to demonstrate our opposition to the cuts in the months to come.

For more information on local resistance to the cuts see: www.hapsnews.net

Friends Groups in the area

There are lots of Friends groups in parks in our area. If you want to be involved with any of these, you should see:

Friends of Downhills Park:

www.downhills.org.uk and
www.friendsofdownhillspark.blogspot.com

Friends of Lordship Rec:

www.lordshiprec.org.uk

Friends of Chestnuts:

ceri.williams@blueyonder.co.uk

Friends of Russell Park:

friendsofrussellpark@yahoo.co.uk

Friends of Belmont/Mannock Road Allotment:

see their facebook page

FRIENDS GO NATIONAL!

The Haringey Friends of Parks Forum is an umbrella organisation that brings together all the friends of parks groups in Haringey to discuss between ourselves and with Council representatives issues to do with parks and green spaces in Haringey. In the past year, a london-wide organisation of friends groups has been set up to coordinate our efforts across London. Also, a nation-wide organisation has started up to work together to link up all the friends groups across the country.



Spring 2011

Downhills Community Cafe opens!

The Friends of Downhills
Park Newsletter

www.downhills.org.uk

AFTER 10 YEARS OF HARD CAMPAIGNING

10 years of effort by the Friends has paid off! We can at last announce...Downhills Community Cafe is Now Open!!

This is the exciting moment park users have been waiting for for years – our very own building with a cafe, toilets, meeting space and information displays!

10 years ago the Friends launched a campaign for such a building for the park, and worked with the Council and architects to design it. Unfortunately, due to funding problems it fell through. Then a few years back we linked up with the old Bowling Club (where the new cafe is now) to try to turn it into more of a community centre – but just when we started to open it up it was condemned as unsafe!



The new cafe with 2 picnic tables and a recycling bin which were provided by a Friend of Downhills bid to "Making a Difference" fund



Most importantly, we encourage all park users to check the place out and enjoy the food and facilities! To begin with it will be open all day Wednesday to Sunday.

A view out towards the tennis courts from our new cafe

COFFEE		HOT DRINKS	
PRESSO	1.00	TEA	80p
CHIATO	.20	FRESH MINT TEA	1.00
TE	.50	HOT CHOCOLATE	1.00 / 1.20
BUCCIANI	.50		

Undeterred, we continued to lobby for funding for a replacement, and the new building with picnic tables is the result. We'd like to get more picnic tables, and to develop a natural play area by the side as well, and welcome suggestions for improvements to the building and surrounding area.

We're very pleased that the Council – who own the building – have found people to run the cafe. Haringey Association for Independent Living (HAIL) will be running it as a training project for people with learning disabilities. We'll be supporting them any way we can to ensure its a success, and many of our members have offered to help staff the cafe as volunteers. Naturally we'll also be continuing to use the premises for our meetings and activities, and to display useful information.

COME TO THE AGM

See back of the newsletter for details of the Friends of Downhills AGM on 17th April 2011, 5pm



David Macdonald 1942-2010

David Macdonald was Chair of Friends of Downhills Park from 2001-2010. He was especially keen on gardening, wildlife, and photography. He enjoyed Tottenham marshes, the Lea Valley, and other Tottenham parks, but Downhills was his first love. He grew up next to it; it had been a lifeline for him as a child, and he had an excellent memory of all the changes it had undergone. He had played there as a child, played football there as an adult, and took his own children there to ride bikes and play football. He saw it as an important resource for the whole community.



David Macdonald, replanting Keston Road fence with Spotted Laurels, 2007

All these skills and interests made him an ideal member of the Friends of Downhills Park, established in 1999. In 2001, when Rob Rosenthal, the first Chairman, retired, David was elected in his place. He was active in organising the 2003 centenary celebrations in the park, which were a great success and in 2004 he took early retirement from his job, and dedicated himself almost full-time to the voluntary work of the Friends.

He worked hard to raise funds for projects such as tree and bulb planting, new steps and railings, making bird and bat boxes. He helped to organise, and always took the lead in, practical work for these projects in the park, happily getting his hands dirty – tree planting, bulb planting, shrub planting, helping with sculptural installations, and more.

Sometimes he undertook these tasks single-handedly. He would always turn out to help setting up and running stalls at the annual Art in the Park event in the summer.

During David's time, the Friends have had many successes in getting improvements to the park and its facilities: new paths in the park, a wildlife meadow, the pedestrian traffic lights between Downhills Park and Lordship Rec, the Green Flag, the steps at the north end between the park and Midnight Alley, the regeneration of the ageing lime tree avenue in the southern part of the park, the Philip Lane entrance, revived herbaceous borders full of glorious colour and variety near the Keston Road entrance, the reinstatement of the lost pond as a new wildlife pond, bird and bat boxes in the woods,

and finally the new cafe which has been built and is almost ready to open. The pond was particularly close to David's heart and it was wonderful that he lived to see it completed.

David will be greatly missed by everyone. It was wonderful to have had a chairman who had so much passion and determination for Downhills Park. Friends of Downhills and the Macdonald family have commemorated David's tremendous contribution to Downhills Park by placing a memorial bench near the new pond and by planting some oaks.

GREEN FLAG 2010

Another year and another green flag for Downhills Park. This is good for Downhills but no one should be complacent. The judging criteria are a minimum standard for a good park. We want to ensure that Downhills maintains those standards and surpasses them and does not suffer any degeneration due to the huge cuts in the council budget for parks maintenance and staffing in years to come.

LOOK OUT FOR OUR WEB SITE AND BLOG

www.downhills.org.uk
and www.friendsofdownhillspark.blogspot.com

WHY NOT SIGN UP FOR UPDATES

RSPB BIRD SURVEY IN DOWNHILLS PARK



It was a very cold day in January but we had a good day counting the different variety of local birds in the park.

ART IN THE PARK

Last July *Art in the Park* celebrated its 10th birthday! With help from local residents and friends we invited all park users to do painting, drawing, printmaking, sculpture, textiles, and a puppet workshop.

This year we hope to make it another great day, involving people in creative fun in the beautiful surroundings of the park and with the added bonus of our new *Downhills Community Cafe*.

If you would like to help or are an artist or craftsperson (amateur or professional) with any ideas for creative projects at our festival please contact Joan on 0208 881 1018

Next Art in the Park, Downhills Park Sunday 10th July 1pm-6pm

★ We need large buttons for an art in park workshop so if you have any please bring them to a Friends meeting or bring them on the day – thanks



Children enjoying painting in the shade of the trees.

Creative fun for the under 5s supported by Haringey Childrens Centre staff

DOWNHILLS WILDLIFE POND



One of the friends attaching wire netting to the fencing around the pond to stop dogs from running in

Last year the Friends worked with the group 'Froglife' to create a wildlife pond to the north of our woodland area. One year from when it was first dug the Downhills Pond has got frog spawn, insect larva and pond snails in the water. This spring the Friends have planted out the enclosure with foliage cover for frogs and newts, flowers for the bees and insects and

fence climbers for the birds and butterflies. New memorial Oak Trees have been added to the surrounding area. Bird and Bat boxes are being fixed for nests. It is fast becoming a great haven for wild life in our beautiful park. Thank you everyone for all your help and hard work. Why not sit nearby and enjoy it!



A new path, under construction from Downhills School through to Downhills Park